

They Grow Up So Fast

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Summary: Sequel to "Kids Say the Darndest Things." In which Hogan and Newkirk's little girl doesn't stay little forever.

1. Chapter 1

Note: This takes place around the same time as the chapter from There Goes the Neighborhood when Lizzy is 16 and learning to drive. So, she is older in this, but unlike that chapter this one is more from Hogan's POV. (I almost typed POW thereâ€œ!)

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Hogan was not a fan of desk work, but for the sake of his job, he was willing to sit down and just grin and bear it.

Or scowl and bear it, as he was doing currently. He had a sudden wave of sympathy for Klink, who had always seemed to be monocle-deep in some form of paperwork, and the messy pile he was currently entangled in gave him a sudden understanding for the weariness of the former prison camp Kommandant.

He let out a big sigh and picked up one of the thick folders in front of him, which was labelled _Huntingburg Park Vandalism_. Ugh, he remembered that. Someone had painted a smiley face on a bench in said park, and the meddling Huntingburg Improvement Society had had a proverbial fit. He still couldn't fathom how one little event could generate so much paperwork, but he had no desire to go against the six crusading middle aged women that headed the improvement society.

Hogan's thoughts of some kind of accident suddenly befalling their president, Mrs. Hastings, was interrupted by a crash outside his office door, followed by a knock.

"Come in," he huffed, already knowing who was on the other side by the enthusiasm behind the knock.

Hogan's intuition proved correct; through the door came the tall, lanky form of Lt. Ivy, cleared Nazi criminal, school crossing guard, neighborhood watch member, accidental quilting club constituent and, currently, his patrol partner for the day.

"Are you ready to head out, sir?" asked Ivy, standing in front of Hogan's messy desk expectantly.

"Yeah, I'm coming," replied Hogan, getting up and putting his cap on after locating it in the torrent of paper on his desk.

"Where are we patrolling today, sir?" asked Ivy, as they made their way out of Hogan's office.

"Regular rounds, I think," he replied, waving to Kinch as they walked out. His deputy was currently in charge of the station for the day, and Hogan couldn't be more glad that he wasn't the one stuck answering the telephone. Last time he had that duty, he had gotten a phone call from someone who called the police station because they wanted him to arrest their husband for insulting their cooking.

Once the two men were in the vehicle and driving, Ivy did what he normally did when he was on patrol with Hogan: make awkward conversation.

"So...sir...how was your day?" the young man asked.

"Ugh. Too much paperwork," said Hogan, stopping at a crosswalk to let a lady with shopping bags cross the street.

"Oh. That's too bad. What are you doing later?"

"Eating and then sleeping, hopefully. Lizzy's in Cleveland with Newkirk for another one of her violin concerts."

"Aren't you going to go watch her?"

"I was going to, but I'm on duty all day."

"Oh. How is...everyone?"

"They're fine," said Hogan, wishing that his young partner found silence peaceful instead of awkward.

"Good. That's good. I mean, I see Officer Newkirk a lot, so I know he's good, but I never see Lizzy so it's good to hear she's doing well. Not that I think she wouldn't be doing well, but it's nice to know that she is...doing well, I mean," said Ivy.

"You know, I never really met Lizzy. I saw her once or twice when she was a kid, but it's kinda funny that our paths never crossed. Not funny, like, laughing funny, but funny in a weird coincidence sort of way."

"Mm-hmm," said Hogan, hoping that the young man would just leave him be for once.

He got his wish for a few minutes, until he knew that Ivy was going to explode if he didn't break the silence with something.

"So, sir, are you going to the Huntingburg Improvement Society's dance next weekend? I heard Mrs. Hastings talking about it the other day."

"Nope," was the only answer Hogan gave. He knew Ivy would have liked for him to elaborate, but he couldn't think of a real reason why he didn't want to go other than at this point he might strangle Mrs. Hastings on sight, especially after she had called his house at midnight one night to inform him that she had seen a "suspicious car driving slowly past her house," which had turned out to have been him coming home late from work.

Hogan felt bad that his grumpy mood and clipped tone had effectively shut his partner up, but he was determined to enjoy the peace and quiet for a few minutes before speaking.

"Are you going?" he asked, parking the car in a spot along the road.

"No, sir. I can't dance. Well, I can, but I can only waltz, and I don't think they're gonna be doing that there."

"You have other plans, then?"

"Well, sir, I was hoping to be able to finish ironing my dress uniform," was the reply.

"Well...just...don't have too much fun."

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A few nights later, at the end of a long and tiresome workday, Hogan was more than happy to come home, plunk down at the table, and just be able to drink his coffee and read his newspaper in peace.

Lizzy had gotten home from school a little while ago and was upstairs doing homework. Newkirk was at work, so Hogan had the rare privilege of being alone.

Hogan was halfway through a fascinating article about how to remove peanut butter stains from clothing when he was interrupted by a knock on the door.

Sighing, he got up and opened the door, only to find an unfamiliar face there.

"Can I help you?" he asked the young man at the door.

"Hello, sir. Is Lizzy here?"

"That depends. Who are you?"

"Fred Hastings," said the young man, not put off by Hogan's standoffish attitude.

"Oh. Your mother the one who's President of the Huntingburg Improvement Society?"

"Yes, sir, that's her," replied Fred.

"Right. What was it you wanted again?"

"Is Lizzy here? I want to ask her something," said the young man.

"...I'll go see if she's busy," said Hogan, not really liking how confident Fred Hastings was.

He walked up the stairs to his daughter's room, and knocked softly on the door.

"Come in!" came the reply.

He opened it to find her laying on her stomach on her bed, books and papers and Schultzie spread out all around her.

"Hi, dad," she said, smiling up at him.

He could never help smiling back. "Hi, Liz. Someone's at the door for you."

"Who?"

"Some boy named Fred Hastings."

"Ugh, tell him I'm not here," said Lizzy, turning back to her textbook.

"I think he knows you're home, Lizzy."

"Well, can't you tell him I'm busy?" asked Lizzy, sitting up.

"Sure, but what's wrong with the kid?"

"Fred's a creep. I don't like him. He probably wants me to go with him to that stupid dance his mother is putting on, anyway," she replied, giving Schultzie a scratch under his chin. The ancient cat let out a rusty purr.

"Alright, sweetie, I'll tell him you're busy," said Hogan leaving the room. He didn't know why, but he was really glad that Lizzy didn't have the same interest in Fred Hastings as he had in her. Come to think of it, Lizzy never really showed any interest in any of the hopeful young men that he occasionally saw around her.

He would have given the idea more thought, but it slipped his mind as he went back downstairs.

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The next time Hogan heard the name of that young man was only a day

later. He had taken some work home with him and was shuffling through it in the living room with the radio playing softly in the background when the door opened and two young girls came in.

Lizzy shouted a hello to her father in the living room, and she and Ida began to unpack their school things on the kitchen table.

It was peaceful listening to them chatter over their math homework, and he smiled as he went back to his work. It was a few minutes later, after they had finished working on something, that their conversation caught his attention.

"...can't believe _Fred Hastings _asked you to the dance, and you said _no_â€|"

"I don't know, something about him creeps me out."

"But he's so dreamy! Everyone's so jealous of youâ€|"

"That doesn't change the fact that I don't like him," he heard Lizzy say firmly.

She got that from him.

"...you're still coming to the dance, right?"

"I'd rather stay home and practice my violin. I'm working on a new Vivaldi pieceâ€|."

"Oh, Liz. I was going to go with Tommy...I was hoping we could double-dateâ€|"

"No."

"Oh, please...can't you find someone? My mother won't let me go unless someone else is with usâ€|"

"Idaâ€|"

Despite his ire for the Huntingburg Improvement Society and its leader, Hogan didn't think it would be a terrible idea for Lizzy to get out and do something with kids her own age. She had a grown-up solemnness to her sometimes that made her seem older than her sixteen years, and he felt bad that Ida's adolescent life didn't have an equally frivolous friend to share it with.

It seemed like every time he heard the two friends talking about something, Lizzy was giving her friend a reason she didn't want to see a movie, rollerskate, or go dancing.

He knew it really wasn't his place, but he couldn't help but think that Lizzy should do something with Ida that the other girl wanted to do. And it wasn't like the Huntingburg Fire Department where the dance was going to be held was the local den of iniquity.

All he had to do was find someone Lizzy could take with her that he trusted. Suddenly, someone came to mind.

Someone who had thought he would be spending the night ironing his pants.

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2. Chapter 2

It was a peaceful day at the police station.

And by peaceful, it meant that there were no oddball phone calls, no arrests, and best of all, no paperwork. It was the kind of day that Hogan was free to sort through his office, get things cleared away, file things, and get to be reminded of what color his desk was after having been buried for weeks.

He was especially grateful for the reprieve since the last few weeks had been so hectic.

Shortly after they had celebrated Lizzy's 18th birthday, she had gotten an invitation to spend a month in Vienna, performing at various prestigious concert halls with the exclusive Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Needless to say, it had been the opportunity of a lifetime.

Unfortunately, no good parent could let their eighteen year old daughter travel abroad for a month on her own. More unfortunately, a month was just too long of a time for either he or Newkirk to take off from work.

However, not everything was unfortunate. He had decided that Lizzy's chaperone would be the person he had trusted to take her to her first dance, her prom, and on her senior trip: Lieutenant Ivy.

It didn't hurt that he could speak German, either, which, they had informed him, had come in handy many times in their travels.

He loved the way Lizzy described the majestic castles and buildings she had seen, the art in the museums, and the architecture of the Ringstraße. It was during these pleasant thoughts that the opening of his office door brought him out of his reverie.

"Heya, Sheriff, how's life treatin' ya?"

The man who had walked in was Officer O'Keefe, who had worked at the police station nearly as long as Hogan had. He was a good officer, but the two had never been really close.

"Not, bad. Yourself?" he asked, offering a pleasant smile.

"Oh, I'm pretty good. Just stoppin' by to pick up last week's report," said O'Keefe, taking the appropriate folder out of the filing cabinet that was near the door.

"Good. I think everything's in order," said Hogan, taking a stack of papers from his desk and shoving them into one of the nearby drawers.

"I also wanted to congratulate you on gettin' re-elected as Sheriff," the other man added with a wry grin.

"Thanks. It was a harrowing race, especially considering I was

running unopposed," answered Hogan.

O'Keefe let out a chuckle.

"I don't think anyone had the guts to go up against you, sir. I think I speak for everyone when I say there's no one we'd rather complain about over our coffee breaks than you, sir," he said with a laugh. "Especially Lt. Ivy. I think he would have a nervous breakdown if he had to work under some guy."

"Ah, he's a good kid," said Hogan, in his defense.

"You sure must think so," said O'Keefe, with a shake of his head.

"Why do you say that?" asked Hogan, detecting something in the other man's tone.

"Well, I mean, you let him travel to another country for a whole month with your daughter. I don't think many people would let their kids go galavanting across Europe with some guy."

"He's not some guy; he was her chaperone, and I got nothing but excellent reports from both of them," said Hogan, starting to get a little annoyed.

"No need to get testy, Sheriff, I'm just sayin'..."

"Saying what?"

"Well, Lizzy's a pretty girl, and Ivy's what...only a few years older than her? I'm just sayin'..."

"Well, I wish you'd stop. Don't you have somewhere to be, Officer?" said Hogan sharply.

O'Keefe just threw up his hands in defense and left the room without another word.

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It was only about an hour later that there was another knock on Hogan's door, but this time his welcome was much less friendly. O'Keefe's insinuations had put him in a bad mood, and it didn't look as though he was going to come out of it any time soon.

It didn't help that the person that entered his office next was none other than John Ivy.

"Well, what do you want, Ivy?" asked Hogan crossly, from his desk.

The young man didn't answer; he came closer to the desk with an unreadable expression on his face. If he was forced to describe it, he would have said it looked to be a mix of determination and stark terror. Hogan noticed that his cap, the one he usually wore with such

pride and affection, was crushed in his hands and stained, as if he had been wringing it incessantly.

"Spit it out," he added when all the other man did was open and close his mouth a few times.

"Sirâ€|. Iâ€|. need to ask youâ€|.. something. Something important," he said, almost a whisper.

"Well, ask me," said Hogan, starting to get a little concerned with how nervous Ivy was acting.

"I want...I...want to ask you...for...forâ€|"

"What is it? A promotion?" guessed Hogan, getting up out of his chair to stand next to the younger man.

"No, sir, not a promotion, I...want to...ask you...for...your permission to...to...to," there was a big, determined breath, "to ask Lizzy to marry me."

It took Hogan a few moments to recover from the shock of being asked such a question, but when he vaguely came back to his senses, he did what any sensible father would do.

He punched Ivy in the face.

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It was a few hours later that found both men sitting outside the station, one nursing a bad mood and the other, a black eye.

It was a while before either man spoke, and Hogan was surprised to find that Ivy was the one who broke the silence.

"Officer Newkirk told me that would probably be your reaction, sir," the young man whispered, not having fully regained his confidence enough to look the other man in the eye.

"I figured you'd asked him first," said Hogan, letting out a sigh. For some reason, he had the oddest craving for a cigarette suddenly, even though he had given up the habit many years ago.

"If it makes you feel any better, sir, his reaction was the same as yours. Only, he got me in the gut."

Hogan let out a humorless snort. "I bet he did."

"Sir, I love Lizzy more than anything in the world, andâ€|"

"So do I," said Hogan, looking right at the other man.

Both were silent for a while.

"Well?" asked Hogan after a while.

"Well, what, sir?"

"Are you gonna ask her?"

"You mean, I can?" gaped the young man.

"I don't see why not," said Hogan, letting out a sign that seemed to come from very deep inside him. "It's Lizzy's decision, not mine."

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To Hogan (and Newkirk's) chagrin, Lizzy gleefully accepts John Ivy's proposal.

It is only after this that she tells her parents just why she happened to fall in love with someone no one in a million years ever would have imagined her with.

She told them about one time when she was eight, and she was waiting for them to come home from work one day. She had been in the kitchen, and, when she heard the sound of a car motor, she had gotten up to see if it was them.

It was, and she remembered watching from the window as a young man with fall gold hair had jumped out from the passenger seat, walked to the other side, and opened the door for a thoroughly amused Sheriff Hogan.

She remembered how they came in, the tall, sandy haired young man once again opening the door, and they were both in the kitchen.

"I remember, you picked me up and gave me a hug, dad, and when you did, I could see John over your shoulder. I remember he waved at me and then went back out to the car. You know, I think I've been in love with him ever since."

She told them how, when she was sixteen, and he'd been her last minute date to the Huntingburg Improvement Society dance, looking very handsome in his freshly ironed uniform. He'd been so polite, and she found his quiet, respectful demeanor charming.

"I remember coming home that night. I was so happy, remember? We'd had such a nice night, but I remember I came home and cried myself to sleep in my pillow, because I knew he'd only ever see me as just a kid."

She even related how she had ducked various cloying invitations to her prom, in the hopes that Ida would ask her to "just bring along your police guy" again. It had worked, and made it even easier for her to suggest him as the necessary chaperone on their senior class trip.

What had really made her over the moon had been the invitation to play with the Vienna Philharmonic, a trip in which she was more than happy to give every gleaming detail to anyone willing to listen.

Her favorite part of the whole trip, she had said, had been the ball. The whole orchestra had been invited to be the guests of honor at Schonbrunn Palace, where elegant music was playing all night.

She had dragged Ivy with her to all the boutiques until she had found a beautiful gown, and then had later dragged him to the ball, despite his assertions that there were plenty of other people there that would have loved to dance with her.

The only word she could think of for the night in Schonbrunn Palace was "divine." It adequately described the food, the music, the dancing, and even the dresses of all the guests. Like something out of a fairytale, she had said.

It had been late in the evening, and she had been dancing with different people she knew from the orchestra, and had even persuaded old Mr. Valerian the conductor to waltz with her once around the palace floor.

By the end of the night, it had seemed that everyone had run out of energy except her. Determined to make the night last as long as possible, she had yanked Ivy up from the chair he had occupied all night and insisted that they had at least one waltz across the beautiful palace floor.

Filled with the crystal sparkle of chandeliers, the beautiful music and enlivened gaiety of the whole majestic evening, Lizzy, proper, reserved, prudent Lizzy, had pulled her talented dance partner down and kissed him.

To his credit, the young man had immediately tried to talk her out of her infatuation. After all, when she was in diapers, he had been holding a gun in the Battle of Berlin.

But since when has anyone been able to talk someone out of loving someone else?

Either way, their sweet, unpretentious romance had begun, and grew into something dangerously like love during their last two weeks in the mysterious and romantic city of Vienna.

Their feelings hadn't changed once they returned to the normal rhythm of life in peaceful Huntingburg.

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When word gets out, no one expects the marriage to last.

Hogan ends up avoiding his new son-in-law at work most days, as well as many of the other officers at the station who liked to needle him about it. He doesn't know if Newkirk is having the same problem, because he doesn't ask about it, and, frankly, he doesn't want to know. And maybe it's because he doesn't like being reminded that Lizzy doesn't live with them anymore, that's she's off, on her own, living in the big old house that had belonged to Ivy's family.

The fact that they only live a minute and a half away doesn't make him feel any better.

Of all animals, none like routine better than humans. And maybe that's what had gotten Hogan into such a rut. His whole life, whether he had liked it or not, had been revolving around Lizzy since the day that little girl had wandered onto his lawn.

He didn't even realize how used to seeing her off to school, to violin practice, cooking with her, walking the dogs with her, how used to everything in the world with her he had become.

And now that the routine was different, he noticed it more than ever.

Fortunately for Hogan, he was beginning to get used to the new routine rather quickly.

He got used to Mr. and Mrs. John Ivy coming over for breakfast every morning, and usually for dinner.

He got used to making his own lunch and cleaning his own toilets.

He got used to driving to work with Ivy while Lizzy went off to give violin lessons.

He got used to Newkirk griping about the way he made coffee, since Lizzy had been the one who had taken that duty over long ago.

And he wasn't the only one who had to get used to the fact that Lizzy's profession sometimes took her out of the state, and sometimes the country, for weeks at a time.

He was pleasantly surprised when Lizzy came over one day and announced that she decided she was not going to do any more international traveling for a while.

When she told him it was because he was going to become a grandfather, he had done what any sensible parent would do: sit down and have a beer. Or three.

But he was happy; happy for them, happy for the fact that everyone was content in their peaceful and thoroughly enjoyable lives.

And he was even happier when Lizzy and her husband came home with a small bundle swaddled in a soft blue blanket.

He knew Newkirk must be feeling the same thing he was when they were introduced to Robert Peter Ivy, who had his mother's hair and his father's eyes.

"We decided to go with 'Robert' as his first name, daddy, because we thoughtâ€¢!"

"... 'Peter Robert' sounded too much like Peter Rabbit."

And as time went on, both Hogan and Newkirk began to realize something: life really hadn't changed much after all.

It was just as full of love as it had always been.

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